

MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
FIRE ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT
June 2002

OFFICE OF THE FIRE ADMINISTRATOR

Commission Office

The following items were discussed at the June 13, 2002 meeting of the Fire and Rescue Commission:

- Chair Aoyagi reported on the following items:
 - final action by the County Council on the MCFRS FY03 Operating Budget
 - the switch over to the new PS2000 radio system is still schedule for mid-November 2002
 - a letter was transmitted to the Office of the County Attorney requesting a formal opinion on the confidentiality of MCFRS personnel records
 - the need to create an EMS Medical Review Committee was outlined to ensure compliance with State regulations
 - a nominating committee will be appointed for the upcoming election of FRC vice-chair
 - a letter was just received from the Department of Labor indicating that "two hatters" can volunteer with the LFRDs
 - due to security reasons, public parking on the G2 level of the EOB will be eliminated in the near future, and alternate parking locations for public parking will be identified
 - an update was provided concerning the initiative to implement caches of medications in case of bioterrorist attacks
- The minutes of the May 9, 2002 FRC meeting were approved.
- The Consent Calendar was approved, which included appointments to the COPDI Council, appointments to the MFSPQB Local Review Board, and technical amendments to the CY 2001 LOSAP approval.
- The placement of commercial insurance for the MCFRS in FY03 was approved.
- A proposal to place on the table amendments to the FRC by-laws was withdrawn, and the FRC By-Laws Committee will present a revised proposal at the July 11, 2002 FRC meeting.
- Changes proposed by Council staff to the *Code of Ethics and On-Duty Personal Conduct* regulation were approved. This document will be returned to the County Council for final action.
- The proposal to establish DECON units for the MCFRS was approved. These units will be housed at station 19 and station 26.
- The *Interim Procedure for FRC Appeal Hearings* policy was approved. This interim policy will remain in effect until a permanent Executive Regulation is promulgated.
- The Commission concurred with the Fire Administrator's recommended allocations of FY02 Senator Amoss Funds.
- The Commission was briefed on the LFRD third quarter budget analysis for FY02.

Research and Planning

Emergency Management

4th Preparedness - Planning sessions were held with officials to make sure that county agencies were prepared for potential terrorist attacks over the 4th of July holidays. National Homeland Security alerting remained at the "yellow" level, but county officials took precautions to ensure our readiness to respond if alerting levels were increased. The Dialogic Automated Notification

System in the EOC was tested. Agencies updated OEM on staffing availability for the holiday weekend.

NPS Workshop - The preliminary recommendations report of the contractor for the National Pharmaceutical Stockpile Workshop was forwarded to State. The report had to be filed within 30 days as a follow-up requirement of the \$20,000 federal anti-terrorism planning grant. The funded three-day NPS planning workshop was held in early June in St. Michael's and included State officials and representatives from Montgomery County and Prince Georges counties. The NPS Workshop, which included county representatives from MCFRS, Police, HHS, and OEM held a conference call with the Center for Disease Control. The group drafted a plan for the distribution of millions of units of medicines or medical supplies, especially in the event of a bio-terrorist event. Among issues discussed were distribution priorities for first responders and hospital workers, reporting procedures, and transportation coordination of the national "push pack" in the region. Information from the workshop will be tested as part of the fall NPS Exercise.

NPS Exercise - A National Pharmaceutical Supplies Exercise is being planned for September 25th. Participants will include the five area hospitals, the Emergency Management Group, and other county agencies. The procedures being developed and tested will help improve our capabilities to respond to incidents of bioterrorism, such as anthrax, smallpox, plague, and other agents. Planning meetings have been held since April and will be more frequent over the summer.

NOAA Radios - The NOAA Weather Alert Radios which will be distributed to each of the elementary schools, both public and private, were picked up from Maryland Emergency Management Agency and are being programmed. Public school officials worked with OEM staff and volunteers, and light duty firefighters from MCFRS to begin the programming to customize the radios for Montgomery County alerts. Montgomery County is receiving the largest allocation of any jurisdiction in the State. The radios were purchased with a federal mitigation grant to MEMA and the counties. At the last minute funds were made available to include distribution to each of five college sites in the County. Distribution was delayed for months while MEMA worked out problems with the manufacturer. In addition to severe weather alerts, the radios can be used to announce national homeland security alerts.

Haz-Link Access - Staff from OEM have been very busy working the e-Montgomery automation staff and MCFRS to make the transition over to XP and to put the Hazlink data system on a special SQL server. Unanticipated problems delayed the transition which was expected by July 1st to coincide with the change over to the new fiscal year records. Hazlink not only provides key risk information to the field and EMG agencies, but is used to track the revenue program generated by the licensing of businesses with hazardous materials. Distribution of emergency planning information on 24 hour contacts, key notifications, and chemical inventories was distributed to all the fire stations in June. District Chief Ey and OEM staff are available to respond to questions about the use of the data by field units.

MML - Kathee Henning from OEM participated as part of a multi-jurisdictional panel to brief the Maryland Municipal League on Emergency Preparedness efforts during their annual convention June 24th. The panel included the Don Keldsen, the State Director of Maryland Emergency Management Agency and Clay Stamp, Ocean City's OEM Director, who joined Kathee to discuss preparations at the municipal, county and state levels. A Fire Officer from Ocean City was also on the panel to highlight the use of the Incident Command System for municipal public safety workers.

Dirty Bombs Training - The Radiological/Dirty Bombs workshop has been rescheduled to September. Attendance at the program will be limited to first responders and EMG so that security issues, especially about explosive devices, may be discussed. Registration is available through the Office of Emergency Management.

Team C - Meetings have been held with Bob Nemchin, Deputy Chief Jarboe, District Chief Stephan, Lt. Lester, Sgt. Holt, and others to plan for a radiological exercise for the EMG and county agencies after January 1st. An application for federal funding was deferred by State staff until after October 1st. Planning efforts continue among county agencies for the January-February 2003 effort. A scenario was drafted for the Radiological Workshop, now planned for September.

Animals in Disaster - Planning continues for the July 30th Animals in Disaster Workshop. Speakers will discuss a broad range of issues including animals as sentinels to attacks of bioterrorism, problems with mass disposal of dead animals, and public concerns for pets. The results of the planning efforts underway will be incorporated into changes in the County's Annex X - Animal Services annex of the Emergency Operations Plan.

Annual CAO Briefing - Reminder emails and notices have gone out to the EMG for the Annual Emergency Management Briefing to the CAO, scheduled for August 14th. Department and Agency heads, EMG Disaster specialists, Fire Chiefs, and representatives from schools, utilities, transportation networks, and others are expected to attend. The program will review post September 11th lessons learned, the EMG annual work program, training and exercise initiatives, and where we go from here.

Homeland Security Workshop - Kathleen Henning attended a RAND hosted Homeland Security Workshop held in Arlington to discuss critical infrastructure protection and public awareness issues. Invitees included fire and emergency management, law enforcement, and health officials from around the country representing national organizations such as IAEM, IAFF, NEMA, Metro Police Chiefs, NACo, Municipal League, and many others. Information gathered at the workshop was forwarded to Governor Ridge for his briefings of the President and Congress on recommendations for reorganization, strategic planning, and funding. Overwhelmingly participants recommended that the bulk of funding be made available to state and local organizations to build up and maintain our first responder capabilities.

City of Gaithersburg – Fire Administrator Aoyagi briefed the Mayor and Council on Emergency Preparedness, with K. Henning available for questions. City Officials expressed confidence and support to county officials. Issues raised by citizens which will be followed up are questions on the security of releasing information under Freedom of Information requests, evacuation and shelter plans for citizens, coordination with NIST, and use of pharmacists to assist public health officials. City officials were reminded that public high schools are the predesignated facilities for shelters, and that the EMG has a Shelter Task Force with HHS, Red Cross, Community Use of Public Facilities, Recreation, Animal Services, Regional Service Centers and the Volunteer Center that routinely plan for evacuation and shelter contingencies.

ESF/COG - OEM and MCFRS have been participating in a number of planning sessions with the Council of Governments over the past two months to develop Emergency Preparedness strategies based on the ESF or Essential Support Functions of the Federal Response Plan. The meetings have been time consuming and overlap some of the planning efforts already in place by other COG committees. Red Cross assisted OEM in attending the ESF 6-11-15 meetings on Mass Care, Food, and Donations and Volunteer Management issues. Deputy Chief Allwang has been covering the Fire, EMS, HazMat, and Terrorism ESF meetings and will update the EMG.

NWS - Kathleen Talbott attended the annual National Weather Service training program in Silver Spring June 28th. Information on the revised Heat Index system was presented and later shared with Operations of MCFRS.

Community Education Safety Section

- Attended various Staff meetings.
- Replied, by phone or email, to 80 citizen, 25 FD, & 10 “other” (media, county gov’t) inquires (13 hours).
- Met with various department staff and members totaling 15 hours.
- Composed various Memos and Safety Tips for dissemination to all work locations.
- Scheduled various community education events and classes (13 hours).
- Dealt with various personnel and program issues relating to community safety.
- Various correspondences composed and disseminated. (11 hours)
- Continued with various Fire Evacuation Planning sessions for various High/Mid Rise Office/Residential, churches, and other 1-story buildings NOW IMPACTING over 82,000 people encompassing 95 HOURS.
- Reviewed bids, proposals, and rough drafts for various education literature and items. (1.5 hours)
- Composed and sent out several eNewsletter’s.
- Meetings re Community Safety Academy/CERT program developmental (16 hours).
- Operation Extinguish management & contract meeting. (3 hours)
- Various Fire Safety lectures, Health Fairs, Community Events, and Career Day presentations to various groups and schools by this office and some stations. 800 kids and 600 adults impacted.
- CPSS Tech’s participated in several Car Seat Checks.
- Taped “Inside MCFRS Today” segment. (1 hour).
- Home Fire Safety Evaluations conducted. (4 hours)

Corporate Development Services

Automation Section

Fleet and Facilities Section

Grants Management Section

Property Section

DIVISION OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

Bureau of Operations

Administration

Safety

In a three-year survey of vehicle crashes by DFRS drivers it was found that backing constituted 22% of the incidents. Members of the safety team have developed a draft Backing Policy,

intended initially for DFRS, but eventually MCFRS. In addition the other vehicle safety/crash investigation policies are under review and revision.

Injuries reported to MCI increased 13.8% from calendar year 2000 to 2001. EMS continues to be the area causing the most injuries and Strains lead all injury types.

DTC James Lesnick has been assigned as the Respiratory Protection Program Manager, with FF Mark Barrick (8A) assigned to handle day-to-day issues with the shops.

The National Fire Academy Incident Command System, adopted by the COG Fire Chiefs several months ago as part of the Mutual Aid Operations Plan is up and running in Montgomery County. There have been the expected transition issues tied to identifying the various fireground components.

A/C McGary conducted two Incident Command System classes for Montgomery County's Public Health senior staff.

Specialty Teams

Collapse Rescue/Urban Search and Rescue

Swiftwater Rescue Team

Bureau of Program Support Services

Administration

Communications

June 2002

Total Telephone Calls Received:	34,158
Total 9-1-1 Calls Received:	10,233
Total Admin Calls Received:	22,908

- District Chief Patullo sponsored the Northern Virginia Interoperability meeting at 1300 Quince Orchard Blvd.
- Jim Grissom attended the APCO Homeland Security Summit on June 5th in Washington D.C.
- Jim Grissom and Capt. Leslie Cook attended the Motorola End User Train-the-Trainer course on June 6 and 7.
- Jim Grissom attended the "pilot" version of the Mobile Data Training course.
- Jim Grissom and Troy Nolan completed the Emergency Medical Dispatch Training course in Westminster, MD on June 24-26th.
- Two firefighter-rescuers completed the public safety telecommunicator testing process.

Training

The 38 members of Recruit Class #21 graduated on June 14, 2002 in a ceremony held in the Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center of Montgomery College.

Exams completed for Emergency Vehicle Driver Testing in June are:

Written	9
Practical	10

Members of EMT-Paramedic Class #23 (nighttime) and EMT-Paramedic Class #24 (daytime) completed their classes in June with a final exam. The National Registry Exam for both classes will be held in July. EMT-Paramedic Class #24 will be released back to Operations on July 14th.

A graduation ceremony for the members of EMT-B Basic Classes #298, #299, #301, EMT-Paramedic Classes #23, #24 and Essentials of Firefighting Class #02-2 was held on Friday, June 28th in the Auditorium of the University of Maryland, Shady Grove Center.

Bureau of Life Safety Services

Administration

Fire Code Enforcement

Fire and Explosive Investigation

In June, Fire and Explosive Investigators investigated 22 accidental fires and 20 criminal fire related incidents. The Bomb Squad responded to a total of 21 explosive / suspicious package / letter, threat incidents. The total estimated dollar loss for accidental fires was \$ 882,700 and \$ 398,570 for criminal fire related incidents. Investigations were also conducted regarding two separate victims that were burned.

The section participated in several public education displays this month, one at the Park Police facility in Norwood and the other at the Cabin John Park.

The annual fireworks press conference was held and the section conducted an aggressive public education effort regarding fireworks by reaching out to the community's with flyers and poster in mercantile stores, shopping centers, pools and government centers. Thanks to all of the LFRD's that posted a fireworks message on their station marquees.

Investigators closed three cases this month with the arrest of four juveniles in the up-county area.

DIVISION OF VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

- Met with Chief Strock, Fred Welsh and Dep. Chief Allwang regarding a general discussion regarding support vehicles
- Met with Chief Strock, Dep. Chief Master and Capt. Jacobs regarding a planned Metro exercise in Aug. or Sept., in Bethesda
- Participated in a forum with the Fire Administrator, Dr. Beasley, Ass't. Chief Carr, etc., and representatives from the Fairfax Co. Fire and Rescue Dept. regarding employee and volunteer counseling
- Met with Chief Urban and a BFD Board member regarding the Sta. 20 issue
- Discussed the EMBRS problem with Chief Strock, Ass't. Chief Wheeler and Fred Welsh and possible solutions

- Attended a meeting with the Public Safety Committee regarding an updating by the Fire Administrator on the DOL issue
- Attended a briefing with the hospital CEOs by the EMG on various issues
- Attended a Bio –Chem terrorism meeting
- Held another meeting on Pollution Prevention
- Met with Chief Long, Cheryl Reed and Carl Ayton (Co. 13 accountant) to settle financial Issues, e.g., 508, with Damascus
- Held a special meeting with DVFRS staff to discuss the duties of the position vacated by T. Hale
- Held another meeting on Pollution Prevention
- Attended the Fire Board, Human Relations, Safety and Training, Chefs' Advisory Committee meetings and the Fire and Rescue Commission and Fire and Rescue Association meeting
- Mediated personal, personnel and/or sensitive issues with various LFRDs, etc.